

# Brookline Preservation Commission

## Local Historic District Report

Address: 12 Worthington Road

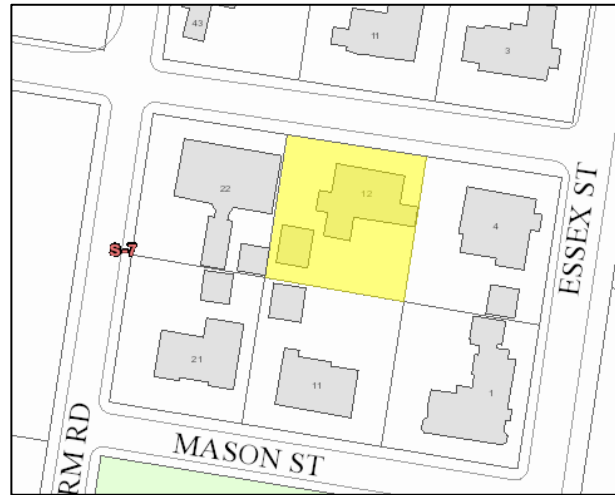
District: Cottage Farm LHD

Applicant: ZeroEnergy Design

Date Built: 1912

Architect: Frank A. Bourne

Builder: J.J. Powers



### Statement of Significance:

The home at 12 Worthington Road was built for Borden and Alice Covell in 1912. Borden worked in Boston as a coal merchant for the first part of his career. The Covells raised four children in the home, residing there until 1942. By 1942 he was employed by the U.S. Department of the Interior and apparently in the process of relocating, with a mailing address at the Lee Sheraton Hotel in Washington D.C.

Architect Frank A. Bourne graduated from the MIT School of Architecture and trained in the office of Shepley, Ruten & Coolidge. He designed many churches earlier in his career as well as a large number of houses in the Back Bay. He is best known as an author, most notably of *A Study of the Orders of Architecture* (1906).

The Cottage Farm neighborhood was developed by Amos A. Lawrence beginning in the mid nineteenth century. Located on 67 acres in the northeast corner of Brookline, the neighborhood is comprised of single family homes and a few educational or religious institutions. Common scale creates architectural harmony in the neighborhood. Homes in Gothic Revival, Mansard, Queen Anne and Georgian Revival are common in brick, stone, shingles and stucco. The 2 ½ story brick home is a restrained Jacobethian Revival design with arched dormers, parapet gables that break the cornice line and bay windows on the facade.

The garage was a later addition to the property, built in 1919 by architect James H. Richie. A heating room with an exterior door and chimney was added to the garage in 1929. Alterations to the home include a 2<sup>nd</sup> story added to an existing ell and a 1 story wing in 1920, also designed by Richie. In 2002 copper gutters replaced existing wood gutters on this 1920 addition.

## Proposed Alterations:

The applicant's goal for the project is to extend the lifespan of the property into the next century with a focus on energy/carbon and fossil fuel reduction. Scope will address deferred maintenance and modernization. The proposed alterations include:

Changes that do not require review:

- Repointing brick as needed with mortar to match existing.
- Repair/in kind replacement of trim.
- Repair/in kind replacement of copper gutters and downspouts.
- In kind repair to slate roof.
- Repointing/in kind repair of brick site wall along property line.

Changes that require review (some also require zoning relief)

- Replacement of all windows with simulated divided light, simulated double hung triple pane windows.
- Replacement of all doors.
- New/enlarged window and doors at the rear of the home.
- Reconstructing garage to match existing footprint.
- Construction of an addition connecting the garage and the home.
- Removal of rear chimney from 1920's addition.
- Installations of new ground mount heat pump condensers at the side of the garage and the rear of the left elevation. Scr

## Applicable Guidelines:

General guidelines

- No artificial siding may be installed.
- Wood windows should be retained.
- Historic carriage barns and automobile garages should be preserved.
- Traditional building materials should be used for existing buildings.

Windows

- Existing windows should be repaired not replaced.
- If an applicant believes that a window cannot be repaired, the applicant's proposal for replacing and window(s) will be reviewed on a window-by-window basis.
- If a replacement window is proposed, the materials and design of the existing window, including the casing, size, number of panes and type of window (e.g. single pane, true divided light), should not be changed, unless the window is not a character defining feature of a façade, in which case minor changes in proposed replacement window may be approved by the Commission.
- If a replacement window is proposed, it should not have muntin bars greater than 7/8ths" wide and should not have jamb liners contrasting in color to the windows.
- If a window in new construction has insulating glass and if the division of the lites of glass is deemed appropriate by the Commission, it should have either "true divided lites with muntins" no wider than 7/8ths" and (ii) dark colored internal spacer bars, but it should not have either flat muntin grids applied to the inside or outside panes nor removable muntin grids.
- New and replacement windows should not be clad in non-historic materials. Vinyl or vinyl-clad and metal-framed sash, and replacement windows incorporating external storm panels that are integrated into the sash, should not be used.
- Tinted solar glass should not be used.
- Wood frames should not be metal panned and the dimensions of window openings, jambs and sashes should not be changed.

## Doors

- Existing doors and door openings, including transoms and sidelights, should be repaired not replaced.
- Doors, including garage doors, should not be made of metal or plastic.
- If an existing door cannot be repaired or is an inappropriate door, the proposed replacement door should be made of wood and, if glazed with muntin bars, should have true divided lights.

## Chimneys

- The height and original pattern of decorative brickwork in chimneys should be maintained.

## New Construction

- Alterations and additions should be compatible with the character of the building and earlier additions in terms of size, scale, massing, material, location and detail. The original portion of the building and earlier additions should continue to be recognizable apart from the addition by means of massing, articulation of setbacks, trim and ornamental detail. Additions should be designed so that the primary elevations of the original building remain clearly delineated.
- In areas where historic garages are generally detached, new garages should be detached. Attached garages should be located behind the main mass of the house and/or not facing the street. Garages with three or more bays are not historically appropriate except on large estates.
- The Commission will consider discrete additions and new buildings incorporating non-historical design vocabularies and materials, as long as they are consistent with the intent of these guidelines.

## Preliminary Findings:

The applicants have provided multiple scenarios for the addition they are proposing. As they have stated a preference for the first option, this report covers that option only. Other versions are included in the full plan set and may be used by the Commission in their discussions of the project.

The proposed construction of the addition to connect the garage to the house is not supported by the Design Guidelines. In the section on new construction, the Guidelines state that garages should not be connected to the house if the prevailing historic condition in the neighborhood is detached garages. This historic garage is detached, as is the one next door and many others on the street. The Commission has a strong track record of upholding the requirement that detached garages remain detached. If attached garages are allowed, the Guidelines specify that they should not face the street, which this one does. Further, the demolition of the existing library removes a portion of the house that is preferably preserved even though it is not original. The design review principles established in the Design Guidelines state that changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right should be retained and preserved.

The removal of all windows and replacement with triple-pane simulated divided light; simulated double hung; aluminum clad casement sash and the replacement of all doors with aluminum clad doors is not supported by the Design Guidelines. The changes to materials, construction, operating style and the lack of consideration given to restoration are all violations of specific provisions of the Guidelines. The applicants are requesting that the Commission consider waiving these requirements due to the environmental goals for the project. Under MGL Chapter 40C, Section 7, the factors which the Commission may consider in their review of Local Historic Districts are outlined. These include historic and architectural significance of buildings and sites and their materials. The Commission is also asked in this section, when ruling on the use of solar energy systems, to consider the state's policy of encouraging solar energy systems and protecting solar access. Accordingly, the Commission has a strong track record of reviewing and approving solar systems in Brookline's Local Historic Districts. MGL Chapter 40C has not been updated to reflect the latest developments in energy conservation and fossil fuel reductions, but the state as well as the Town have expressed commitment to these goals. The

Commission may consider the applicant's request in light of this if they feel it is appropriate. If this request is considered, the Commission should ask for more information on the environmental impacts of the window and door replacement, such as full life cycle analysis. The Commission has long understood the benefits of repairing historic single glazed wood sash, which can outlast their modern counterparts by centuries with proper maintenance. This benefit serves the environmental goals of Zero Waste, which Brookline is in the process of developing policies to achieve. The larger environmental context of the Commission's decisions is undeniable and important. The first priority of the Commission and the Local Historic District, however, is the protection of the historic character of the district and the buildings within it, including the materials that create this character. The Commission should keep in mind that if this principle is to be modified to make an exception for this proposal, there should be ample evidence of comprehensive environmental impact presented to justify the removal of historic materials.

The changes to the rear of the property are substantial, but the Commission should keep in mind the limited visibility of these items when considering their appropriateness.



Aerial view of 12 Worthington Road, looking east.





Aerial view of 12 Worthington Road, looking south.



Aerial view of 12 Worthington Road, looking west.





Aerial view of 12 Worthington Road, looking north.





Views from Worthington Road







Visibility of garage from Worthington Road







Visibility of existing low wall connecting house and garage (top); Visibility of garage from Worthington Road (bottom)



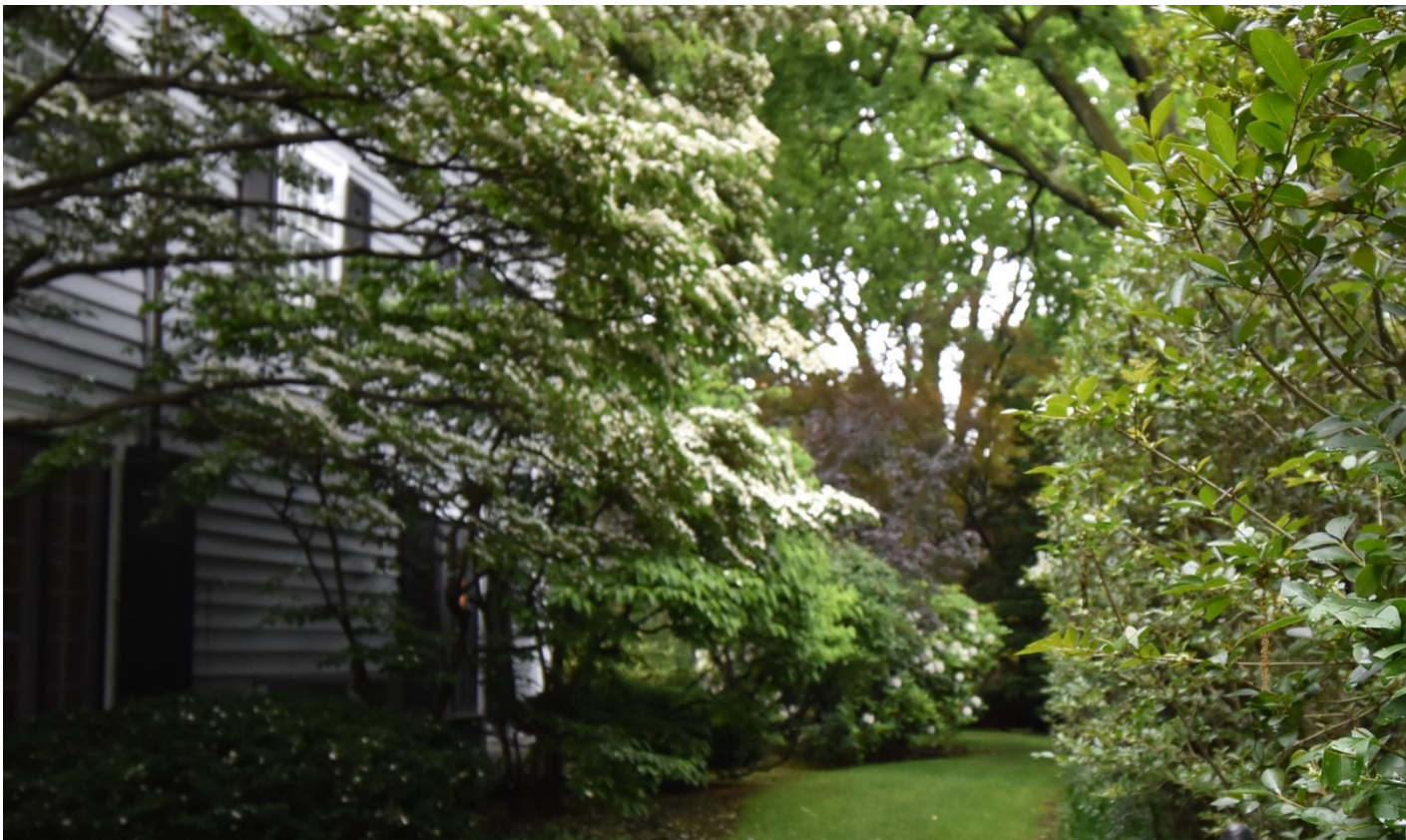




Visibility of garage & right elevation of house from Cottage Farm Road (top); visibility of rear elevation from Mason Street (bottom)







Visibility of rear from Mason Street







Front entrance, Worthington Road.





Existing windows, façade

